

# PRIVACY MODE SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR HOME NETWORK TELEPHONE

## ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

5           A system and method are provided for controlling  
communications privacy in a Home Network telephone system. The  
method comprises: using a gateway to send and receive calls on at least  
one external telephone line; supplying privacy and public mode bridging  
options; and, selectively excluding bridges between external telephone  
10 lines and a plurality of Home Network endpoints. In response to the  
privacy mode being selected, the gateway bridges a call between a first  
external telephone line and a first endpoint, and prevents bridges between  
the first external telephone line and other endpoints in the system.  
Alternately, when the public mode is selected, the gateway bridges a call  
15 between the first external telephone line and the first endpoint; and  
permits bridges between the first external telephone line and other  
endpoints in the system. That is, while the call is bridged to the first  
endpoint, a bridge is added between the first telephone line and the  
second endpoint. The privacy and public mode bridging options are  
20 selected with respect to nodes. A node can be an external telephone line  
or an endpoint. That is, a privacy or public mode of operation can be  
selected for a first external telephone line, whether calls are received or  
originated through the Home Network telephone system. Likewise, a  
privacy or public mode of operation can be selected for a particular  
25 endpoint, regardless of whether the endpoint receives or originates the  
call.

10066436-013102